1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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#175 744 urban growths of Hamrun and Sliema were centres of disease. The growth of urban and dockyard employment had not yet been accompanied by any striking educational improvements, and standards of personal hygiene barely tolerable in rural Malta became insupportable in the new towns. At the same time, the growing wealth and opportunities which made possible the new concentrations were not paralleled by similar rates of increase in Internal Revenue. The resulting shortage of capital available for public works delayed the construction of services until concern over conditions in the Garrison centres became acute. Between 1878 and 1886, a new system of drainage and flushing sewerage was constructed in Valletta, Floriana and the Three Cities, three-sevenths of the expenditure being provided by the military authorities. The 1897 sewerage extensions were similarly restricted to that area in which a financial vote could be subsidised by Imperial expenditure (Fig. 33). During this period also, the whole problem of water-supply first became acutely realised and under Chadwick (6) a water-use policy made an embryonic appearance. The 1909 proposals for island-wide sewerage were, significantly enough, for a sea-water flushing scheme, and in spite of depression-caused limitations public funds were made available for servicing the suburban areas of Hamrun and Birkirkara and the casal of Żejtun.

These and similar public works, limited in scale as they may now seem, were already having a controlling effect on epidemic disease by the end of World War I. In 1837 cholera killed 4,000 out of a population of c. 116,000; in 1917 fewer than a hundred people died out of a population which had doubled in size. Bubonic plague caused 4,600 deaths in 1813 but in 1917 only 3 mortalities followed a similar introduction of the disease. By the nature of her position and as a result of sea-borne contacts Malta has always been liable to the introduction of epidemic diseases. The nineteenth century intensification of urban and port activity which caused population concentration in a great conurbation, increased the external contact risk, made more acute the dangers of ignorance and low standards of hygiene but finally the associated expenditure of wealth derived from overseas, and improvements in domestic standards started a break-through into an epoch of adjusted and improved values placed on human life.

#175 658 In the educational field, progress was necessarily slower in that while public health measures were essentially a matter of providing physical services which previously did not exist, formal education had to be accepted *ab novo* by the great unlettered mass of the population, and secular public instruction had to meet the suspicions of the educated few associated with the Church-dominated, Italian-influenced University and academies (7).

British rule was followed by Government controlled education. The first elementary school was opened in 1819 and in 20 years' time there were 11. In 1842 the elementary school system was removed from the authority of the University, as recommended by the Royal Commissioners in 1838 (8), and its effectiveness was considerably increased. Even so, illiteracy was still high at mid-century (9) and the labouring classes still relied for information and guidance on the traditional sources - the Church and to a less extent the gentry.

The 1836 Commissioners noted a situation which is still not completely rectified (10). They blamed the educated classes for lack of initiative in permitting the continuance of an educational system which was geared to the training of priests, lawyers, doctors and civil servants and which virtually ignored wider social and technical needs. This same complaint was reiterated by Keenan in 1880 (11) and by Casolani, Director of Emigration in the 1930's (Chapter VI A). Through inertia rather than by deliberate act, the old social cleavage between the 'Two Nations', was being maintained.

#175 191 658 A prime difficulty was that of language. The Census compilers of 1881 commented thus on the root of the trouble (12): 'The Maltese... form part of the European family, however they speak the dialect of a language belonging to an oriental people with whom they have no social tie nor connection... As the dialect is confined to the Islands of Malta consequently very few literary productions are published in the vernacular, a circumstance which evidently does not favour the diffusion of instruction among the lower classes of the people.

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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'The language... is Oriental and the Education is given in English and in Italian.

'... the Boys and Girls attending the Elementary Schools belong generally to the poor Classes. Before these children can acquire a competent knowledge in any of the Languages taught to them, they are generally taken away by their parents in order to be apprenticed to some trade or employed in agricultural labour. Consequently the child... forgets the Italian and English, foreign to him, owing to want of time and practice in reading and writing, and to his being also obliged to constantly speak and hear nothing but Maltese, the native dialect of kith and kin...'.

Given this situation, a conflict was bound to rise between the claims of Italian and English, with, as we have seen, all that that implied in religious, constitutional and economic affairs. The measures advocated by Keenan and the policy of Savona, Director of Education at the crucial period, resulted in the consolidation of English as the language of instruction. Consequentially English, and more slowly Maltese, gained in importance as Italian declined. While Italian language and culture became the symbols of opposition to the Government, such opposition became less and less associated with general popular feeling. In 1842 less than 4,000 children attended all schools (13); by 1908 almost 18,000 attended the Government primary schools alone (14). In 1902 parents of school-children were asked which language they wished to have used for instruction; the results were striking (15):

Standards up to III - Questioned on basis of either Italian or English

	Malta	Gozo	Both
English	98.7%	87.5%	97.7%
Italian	1.3%	12.5%	2.3%

Standards V and VI - Questioned on basis of single or combined use of languages.

English only	71.2%
English and Italian	27.8%
Italian only	1.0%

By the end of the period under discussion, the policy of anglicisation was triumphant, misgivings regarding the position of the Church had been allayed, and the Maltese economy was firmly associated with the wealth and needs of the Garrison. The Constitutional impasse had no immediate relevance to the life of the people. That social life was still dichotomous, although on a less insular plane than it had previously been.

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1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
EZ6 Malta EZ6

by Australia, and 30 per cent. by the Maltese Government. In addition, the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund has helped to finance vocational training schemes. Even so, as already noted, the burden and the irony of training and sending away that part of the population which potentially is the most productive has been keenly felt in Malta. In 1954, 11,000 emigrants left the Islands, 9,793 under Passage Assistance Schemes, over 8,000 of these for Australia. Since 1955, the policy of encouraging emigration has been implemented less vigorously and the rates of departure have become strongly influenced by political dictates. The social and demographic repercussions of fluctuations in policy need no especial emphasis here.

In conclusion, we may consider the regional variations in emigration. Traditionally, movement tended to be from the countryside into the towns and thence outward from Malta. Exceptional was Gozo in that from villages such as Nadur a direct exodus was already well established in the nineteenth century. The position in recent years is shown in Fig. 63. The three regions with the highest emigration rates each have distinctive characteristics. The North is a newly-settled agricultural region. From its still relatively youthful population with a high birth rate, a larger than average proportion is fitted by reason of age and absence of ties for emigration. The south-eastern district of Birżebbuġa

[p. 160-c]

1: Bowen-Jones et al. K-5 (1955-1958) 1961
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is uneasily superimposed on the traditional pattern. The part played by the Church during the 1956 Referendum on integration with the United Kingdom was most complicated. During the disturbances following the breakdown of Government in the spring of 1958, town and country, proletariat and bourgeoisie, Maltese Malta and Latinised Malta, all reacted differently. Over all responsible actions looms the knowledge that Malta is not a viable independency (4).

As we have seen, education and language have been inextricably involved in politics (5). More directly important is the educational effect on the people as a whole of the system of public instruction. Under the leadership of Dr. Albert Laferla public education became vastly improved in all ways (6), and from his tutelage, more particularly after the Compulsory Attendance Act of 1924, came the generation of Maltese which now forms economically and socially the most important part of the population. After 1933, Italian ceased to be used as a medium of instruction, a standard Maltese orthography came into use (7), and the school system was expanded to meet the most obvious and immediate needs. Education was sadly disrupted by World War II but since that time has continued to improve in quality and range of facilities (8). Compulsory Education as distinct from compulsory attendance came into force in 1946, and in 1955 full-time education became the rule. Some 22 per cent. of children of school age still receive education in private, usually Church run, schools.

It is vital to realise the extent of the social and economic revolution implied in these developments. In the rural areas the change has been one from illiteracy to education within one generation. Even in the towns, and this is particularly true for the new growths associated with dockyard, manufacturing and service industry employment, thoughts and activities are being fundamentally affected by education for the first time in Maltese history. Contrasts between the levels of awareness of the value of formal education are considerable, and the full impact of technical education has yet to be felt - the first Government Technical School was opened in 1934. The chief contrast observable in the field however is between the two age groups, over and under 30 to 35 years of age. The former still contains many illiterate and therefore conservative people; the latter by reason of training as well as age is radical and impatient. The latter attitude is largely responsible for the drift from the land which encourages the domination of agriculture by residual conservatism.

In the field of public health, skeletal public works services had been constructed before World War I. Recent developments may be regarded as logical extensions both in the sector of public works and in the field of medicine. As late as 1936 the judgment of the Chief Government Medical Officer was 'no scheme of sanitary reform ever met with greater opposition than the establishment of the modern sewer system in Malta' (9), but by 1955, about 270,000 or over 90 per cent. of the Maltese population lived in sewered dwellings, Żurrieq alone among the large villages remaining unserved. In parts of the countryside and in the smaller villages, dispersion of settlement renders prohibitive the cost of connection of each dwelling with the public sewers. The more isolated and the more rural areas are now the regions of lowest standards (Fig. 33).

Medical services, particularly in their relevance to the problem of high infant mortality, developed late and slowly (10). The most serious obstacles were those rooted in Maltese social life (11). The strength of the matriarchal tradition in Maltese household has meant that the ignorance of the oldest generation persists in imposing itself on the life of the youngest. Dirt, overclothing and under-feeding, the indiscriminate and early use of farinaceous foods, all these were difficult to eradicate in overcrowded and grandmother-dominated conditions (12). The difficulty of educating in hygiene and personal health an indifferent and tradition-bound population proved insuperable and in 1939 the infantile mortality rate was as high as the average for the preceding 20 years.

The final breakthrough occurred paradoxically during World War II. In 1943 and 1944 housing conditions and diet were worse than any experienced in peacetime but the death rate and the infantile mortality rate began to fall to record

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 179]

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
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CHAPTER II

The National Organizations: State, Church and Political Party

Generally speaking, the activities of government are carried out by a number of departments and boards, each of which is under the control of a director or chairman. Each of these, in turn, is usually responsible to an elected Cabinet Minister. But under the interim constitutional arrangements which followed the resignation from office of the Labour Party in 1958, Department Heads were responsible to a British Chief Secretary and his assistants. Under each Department Head are ranked the various grades of civil servants. These run from the Executive and Clerical Officers through non-pensionable clerk-typists, fatiguemen and industrial labourers. Altogether, some 17,000 persons work for the government. They represent 19 per cent of the total labour force. This makes the Malta Government the largest employer on the islands. Entrance to all but the lowest grades, and promotion between the principal grades within the civil service, are by means of open competitive examinations.

Malta's small size has facilitated the centralized administration required of an island fortress. As already observed, there are no councillors, headmen or mayors, either elected or hereditary, to represent the interests of the villagers to the government or convey the wishes and commands of government to the people. Virtually all the machinery and personnel of government are located in Valletta. Only the police represent government authority in all villages. There are government elementary schools for boys and girls in all villages and almost all hamlets. Now most villages also have a dispensary which is open for a few hours a day under the supervision of a government District Medical Officer and a nurse. There are a few regional post offices and branches of the Department of Emigration, Welfare and Labour. All other public services, such as street sanitation, sewerage (where it exists), water, electricity, repair of roads and so on, which in

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

letters. His high standing in the village, and his contacts with people of influence and power outside it, led people to turn to him for advice. He was asked to represent them in their relations with the outside world. In this capacity he served his parishioners as lawyer, banker and business adviser. He was also the traditional dispenser of charity.

The increasing literacy of the people and their ever-widening range of contacts outside the limits of the parish has somewhat reduced their dependence upon the parish priest. The State's recent involvement in welfare and charity has further weakened it. But if this dependence has been reduced, it has most certainly not been eliminated. Many still call on him to divide inheritances, to argue their claims against the government or to plead with prospective employers, and not a few expect him to be able to secure better roads, new schools, sewerage and playgrounds.

Thus the parish priest is the village's chief spokesman, and many still refer to him as *il-principal tar-rahal*, 'the head of the village'. The government has long recognized this, and makes use of him as a convenient contact with the people. Each Sunday morning, in addition to his own official announcements, the parish priest reads from the altar government notices advising the people of forthcoming elections, immunization campaigns, agricultural extension lectures and so on.

But if the parish priest performs numerous services for his parishioners, both individually and collectively, he has also the power to refuse them. The sanctions with which he can punish disobedience are considerable. They range from declining to write a good conduct certificate to denying absolution in confession. On the other hand, he has the power to give rewards for services rendered. Aside from doing favours for people who have helped him, he can appoint them to offices which confer prestige and authority and, in some cases, are also financially rewarding. All this serves to underline and reinforce his position as a leader in the community.

Parish priests are usually outsiders, but the rest of the village clergy are natives of the communities in which they live. Unlike Catholic priests in Britain or the United States, who live in presbyteries, the diocesan clergy of Malta and Gozo live at home with their relatives. This means that they remain in constant contact with the village. They are often called on to take part in family

2: Boissevain E-5 (1960-1961) 1965
EZ6 Malta EZ6

definition of the dogma of her immaculate conception four years earlier, and to St. Joseph, who was declared patron of the Catholic Church in 1870. Virtually all the secondary partiti are dedicated to one of these two.[1] At the same time, there was a general elaboration of the celebrations connected with the cult of saints, including the Italian and Sicilian custom of having bands play during the festas.[2] These were but a part of the more general influx of Italian ideas and customs which accompanied the refugees from Italy of the Risorgimento, who streamed into Malta following 1850. The propaganda efforts of the pro-Italian politicians of the time assisted in the diffusion of these customs, especially in the urban areas.

During this period a conception of social organization new to Malta was also gaining currency, namely the idea of voluntary associations for laymen, and in particular, social clubs for 'gentlemen'. After the establishment in Valletta of the exclusive British Union Club in 1826 and the equally exclusive Casino Maltese in 1850, clubs of various kinds began to spring up in many villages. They multiplied so rapidly that a local chronicler wrote in 1890, 'Today you don't find a village without one or two, nor a city without three or five.'[3]

The latter half of the last century was a period of relative economic prosperity for Malta. This resulted from the increase in military and naval activity after the outbreak of the Crimean War; the sharp expansion in government spending on public works programmes from 1859 to 1865; and the renewed world demand for Maltese cotton as a result of the cotton shortage created by the American Civil War.[4] The economic boom increased the demand for unskilled labour from the villages. This, in turn, helped to disseminate urban-Italian cultural traits. It also provided a financial basis which permitted increased expenditure on festa decorations, fireworks, and above all, uniforms and instruments for the bands. Finally, this period saw the establishment of government schools in all the villages. City-born schoolmasters moved into rural

[1] See Appendix A.

[2] See, for example, Giuseppe Pitrè, *Feste Patronali in Sicilia*, vol. XXI of *Biblioteca delle Tradizioni Populari Siciliane* (Torino-Palermo, Carlo Clausen, 1900), *passim*. He also indicates that a number of Sicilian towns and villages are divided by rivalry between supporters of different saints. (pp. xlvii ff.)

[3] P. P. Castagna, *Lis-Storia Ta Malta* (3 vols.; Valletta, C. Busuttil, 1890), III, 128.

[4] Charles A. Price, *Malta and the Maltese: A Study in Nineteenth Century Migration* (Melbourne, Georgian House, 1954), pp. 105 ff.

[Village of Mgarr]

Building went ahead slowly on the immense construction as costs were defrayed by private subscription in kind and in money, and the villagers were themselves responsible for much of the labouring work. Money and farm produce of every variety was given towards the cost which, in 1939, had passed £10,000 (R/54 - 12.8.1939); this in a parish which even ten years later had no more than 2,218 people (R/167 - 1948).

With the growth of Mgarr, assistant priests were attached to the Parish, notably Father (later Monsignor) Edgar Salamone, who went to the village in 1920 and became Parish Priest a decade later. The work of this one priest not only pays him personal tribute but illustrates the way in which Mgarr acquired the characteristics and features possessed by other villages of much longer standing in the Islands, with the Church itself as the prime consideration and focus of energy and resources. Mgr. Salamone was "sickened by the ignorance and backwardness of the people of Mgarr"[15] and set about establishing some sort of schooling in the village. He acquired premises, used at week-ends by the part-time village barber, and opened a school in 1920 for about 40 children and adults. Three years later a Government elementary school was opened (19.9.1923) and support for this still novel feature of the village grew fast enough for nearly all children to be attending when the Compulsory Attendance Act was passed in 1926.

At this time the health of the villagers was cared for by a Dispensary which opened once a week and by Mgr. Salamone himself. A statement in the Malta Legislative Assembly of 1933 observed that the Priest of Mgarr kept "a medicine chest of his own and people used to call on him at all hours of the day and night. He used to pack up his medical kit and go to anyone's bedside, whenever he was called for" (R/291, p.6). As in all things the villagers turned to their Priest in difficulty or trouble whether spiritual, medical or social, as had been the custom for centuries. In 1933, however, the first medical officer for Mgarr began his duties in the village, and another of the traditional functions of the Priest passed to specialist hands.

After this, interest was turned again to building and the spacious esplanade in front of the Church was laid out in 1935, followed by a nearby construction to house the Police Station, Post Office, Government Dispensary and the District Medical Officer. Once again the villagers themselves were responsible for a great deal of the building work, as they were in the case of the Church which continued to grow until its completion and dedication in 1948 - at a total cost of some £16,000[15]. By the mid-thirties Mgarr had